

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Sarah White, and I am a resident of Hartford. I am also a member of Hartford Deportation Defense and CT DSA.

I strongly support SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, which would expand HUSKY coverage up to age 18 and is an important step towards ensuring everyone in Connecticut has access to healthcare, regardless of their immigration status.

I have been involved in the immigrant rights movement for many years and have also worked with immigrant families who are struggling to access healthcare in my role as an attorney at non-profits. A situation involving a co-organizer's lack of access to prenatal health coverage due to her family's immigration status, which ultimately contributed to her partner's unjust detention and deportation when she tried to access prenatal healthcare, deeply affected me and strengthened my commitment to immigrant-led organizing to combat the cascading injustices of our immigration system, which affect nearly every aspect of people's lives.

All of us need access to healthcare, including mental health and dental care, and we all know that without insurance, healthcare is prohibitively expensive. I have seen immigrant families go without doctor's visits because they can't access health insurance and can't pay out of pocket. I have seen immigrant children go without therapy and mental health treatment because our state, the richest in the country, denies coverage to most children and adults who are undocumented.

Last year, Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY to children up to age 8. But all kids and all residents need access to healthcare, and we need a plan to expand access to HUSKY for all ages, regardless of immigration status. We cannot leave undocumented families behind, especially as we recover from the pandemic and the ongoing effects of COVID-19, including on our mental health. Children need healthcare, but so do their parents, something that's been proven to increase the likelihood that children are also insured and receive regular medical care.

I strongly support S.B. 284 and urge you to pass the expansion of HUSKY to kids up to 18 this year as we work towards ensuring immigrants of all ages have health insurance.

Sincerely,

Sarah White
167 Beacon St.
Hartford, CT 06105